



THE BOARD REPORT



2005-2006: Issue 4

January and February 2006

The following is a summary of the January 11, 2006, and February 1, 2006, meetings of the State Board of Education.

MEETING WITH THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

The State Board of Education and Board of Governors for Higher Education met on January 11 at the State Legislative Office Building to discuss the implications of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) and the Scholastic Achievement Test (SAT) on students' participation and success in higher education.

Dr. Stephen Coelen, professor in residence in economics at the University of Connecticut and managing partner of the World Institute for Strategic Economic Research at Holyoke Community College, and Dr. Blenda Wilson, president and CEO of the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, presented "First Steps: an Evaluation of the Success of Connecticut Students Beyond High School." The report contains findings of a study that tracked Connecticut students who took the CAPT in their sophomore year of high school in 1996 and examined administrative and educational records to document their behaviors and outcomes beyond high school on seven measures of success:

- interest in college
- time elapsed before starting college
- number of remediation courses in college
- attainment of a postsecondary degree
- credits taken per semester
- number of courses taken and passed in college
- college grade point average

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SCHOOL NUTRITION SUMMIT

State Board of Education Chairperson Allan Taylor welcomed 430 participants to the School Wellness Summit at the Farmington Marriott on February 1. In his opening remarks, Mr. Taylor noted, "The strong response today attests to the importance we place on a quality school health program and our recognition of a good program's potential to promote student achievement and success."

Keynote speaker Dr. Pat Cooper, superintendent of the McComb School District in Mississippi, shared with the conferees his district's dramatic success in implementing a nine-component Coordinated School Health and Wellness Model on student academics and behavior. The model provided a framework for school reform based on programs in nine areas: health education, physical education, health services, nutrition services, counseling and psychological services, healthy school environment, health promotion for staff and family, community involvement and academic opportunity.

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Joint Meeting with Board of Governors for Higher Education (continued from page 1)

The study is the first to evaluate the effectiveness of a high school test in predicting students' later success. Dr. Coelen announced that performance on the CAPT appears to be a good predictor of academic success beyond high school on all seven measures and, in many cases, quite independently of the SAT, the college entrance exam. The study was funded by the Nellie Mae Foundation, the Connecticut Department of Education, the Connecticut Department of Higher Education, the Connecticut State University System and the New England Office of the College Board. The study also provided information about the college enrollment of Connecticut high school graduates who completed the CAPT. Some of the key findings follow:

- Community colleges provide a wide range of students with access to higher education, and give low-income students "the best buy for their money."
- The Connecticut State University System provides a more competitive environment to students, emulating many Connecticut private colleges in terms of the CAPT scores of those students accepted. The University of Connecticut system provides the most competitive environment in the public university sector, and CAPT scores of students enrolled in the system are similar to the CAPT scores of students attending the most selective private colleges in the state.
- Public college institutions enrolled 51.1 percent of all Connecticut high school students who go to college, while private colleges enrolled only 7.1 percent.
- The dropout rate of or completion time by students in all three public higher educational sectors is higher than that of students enrolled in private colleges.
- Many students who attend out-of-state colleges are among the highest scoring students on the the CAPT. This group is likely to enter the Connecticut labor force in smaller proportions than those who remain in Connecticut for college.
- Some of the very best high school students never enter college, including about 10 percent of the very highest scorers on the CAPT.
- There is fairly clear evidence that students take the CAPT seriously.
- Both the CAPT and the SAT offer significant, often independent, explanations of student success in the postsecondary measures studied.

School Wellness Summit (continued from page 1)

Dr. Cooper noted that the impact was equally positive on children with disabilities and those with no identified exceptionalities. He stressed the importance of accountability measures that address academic skills and social and moral behaviors. The McComb School District is located in rural Mississippi, and enrolls about 3,000 students, 85 percent of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and 30 percent of whom are below the poverty level. Dr. Cooper enlisted community support and focused on creating a school system that would address the needs of the whole child.

Released at the Summit was the Action Guide for School Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies, adopted by the State Board of Education. The action guide was prepared to assist districts as they develop and implement their local wellness policies to become effective on the first day of the 2006-07 school year, in accordance with federal legislation.

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH CHINA

China is the world's most populated country, with 1.3 billion people and plays a major economic and diplomatic role in the world. In 2001, Connecticut developed a relationship with China through professional development exchanges and partnerships between Connecticut public schools and schools in Shandong Province. Since that time, nearly 30 delegations sponsored by the Chinese Ministry of Education have come to Connecticut to study our education system and nine delegations from Connecticut have traveled to China to conduct field studies and to establish partner schools in Shandong Province. By April 2006, Connecticut will have 56 partner schools in the provinces of Shandong and Guandong. In 2005, the State Department of Education signed a Memorandum of

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Partnership with China (continued from page 2)

Understanding with the Chinese Ministry of Education's Office of Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language, to initiate a pilot volunteer teaching program in Connecticut schools. Five teachers from China are teaching Mandarin Chinese this school year in Madison, Regional School District No. 7 and Waterford. The Board enjoyed a lesson co-taught by two of the teachers at the Board meeting.

The partnership project is poised to expand in Connecticut, through a collaborative effort of community organizations, economic interest groups and education entities.

SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The Department presented to the Board information about current school-family-community partnership activities and highlighted key challenges, strengths and recommendations to improve partnerships. While partnerships do not take the place of excellent instructional practices, the Board recognizes that successful school-family-community partnerships result in improved student performance in school, students staying in school longer and taking higher level courses, and a higher rate of participation in postsecondary education. The Board reaffirms this belief in its Position Statement on School-Family-Community Partnerships. "An effective program of school-family-community partnerships is not a magic bullet, but one of the critical supports students require to maximize their potential, and one essential step toward closing our state's achievement gaps."

Parent involvement policies must create the conditions for partnerships, and link family involvement to learning and how families can assist at home. These policies should be developed in consideration of specific family and community needs, be revisited and

revised, if necessary, on a regular basis and welcome and value families as partners and provide them with information to support their child's academic success.

Professional development is an essential component in building a strong partnership and must be designed to build a district's capacity to support a comprehensive program of partnerships. Adequate funding, too, is necessary to ensure that partnerships can be maintained. One step the Department is taking toward this end is to include language in state and federal grants regarding use of funds for parent involvement, and providing a list of suggested and allowed activities. Other efforts to strengthen partnerships include enhanced engagement of community groups that work with families (i.e., faith-based organizations), providing incentive grants to schools and districts for comprehensive partnership programs, establishing a professional organization for parent liaisons, and the Education Learning Initiatives for Excellence that support parent involvement and literacy.

2006 CONNECTICUT ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

The Board approved the English Language Arts Curriculum Framework, for use by school districts as they develop curriculum for appropriately sequenced prekindergarten through Grade 12 literacy instruction. It reflects Connecticut's vision that every student will be highly skilled in reading, writing, listening, speaking, viewing and presenting across all content areas. The overarching content standards that the framework supports are (1) reading and responding; (2) exploring and responding to literature; (3) communicating with others; and (4) English language conventions. The framework has been distributed to all school districts and is posted on the Department's website at www.state.ct.us/sde.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK ON INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY LITERACY

The Board approved the Connecticut Information and Technology Literacy Curriculum Framework, for use by school districts as they develop a prekindergarten through Grade 12 curriculum that clearly defines and integrates information and technology skills and competencies across all prekindergarten through Grade 12 curricular areas. The framework is aligned with national goals, standards and principles for student learning. It was developed with the advice and input of district curriculum leaders, content area teachers, principals and superintendents, as well as library-media specialists and members of the Connecticut Educators' Computer Association and the Connecticut Educators' Media Association.

The content and performance standards contained in the framework provide a foundation for initiating local discussions of how best to design an instructional program that will ensure all students have the opportunity to learn and practice the skills necessary to become competent and responsible users of information and technology.

2005 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR TEACHER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Board received from the Connecticut Advisory Council for Teacher Professional Standards its 2005 annual report. The council continued to focus its attention on the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) on teachers and teaching, including requirements for teachers to meet standards of the Highly Qualified Teacher, as defined in the legislation. The council also investigated issues concerning teacher retention and support, the changes to the newest generation of the Connecticut Mastery Test and the Connecticut Academic Performance Test, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

2005 ANNUAL REPORT BY THE ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Board received from the Connecticut Advisory Council for School Administrator Professional Standards its 2005 annual report. The council focused its attention on strategies to strengthen the state's educational leadership, including Connecticut's initiatives to use the State Action for Educational Leadership Project (SAELP) grant to strengthen school leadership to improve student achievement. The Council's second major focus in 2005 was on the implications of NCLB. While it endorsed the NCLB goals, the council believed that greater flexibility in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress requirements should be afforded and took a position against the Act's imposition of unfunded federal mandates on Connecticut.

DESIGNATION OF RECOGNIZED PRIVATE SCHOOLS

The Board approved the designation of "recognized" private schools that are in compliance with Section 10-188 of the Connecticut General Statutes for the purpose of rendering them eligible for certain federal funds. Such action permits private schools with students who would otherwise be eligible for free and reduced lunches to apply for federal funding. Recognized schools are required to file a yearly attendance report with their respective departments of education. A recognized school is not equivalent to an "approved" private school. For example, a recognized school would not be able to issue a state-approved diploma, and its credits may not be readily accepted by other schools. Further, any recognized school that operates a preschool would continue to be required to obtain a child day care license from the Department of Health.

YALE UNIVERSITY – MASTER OF ARTS IN URBAN EDUCATION STUDIES

The Board approved for the period February 2, 2006, through September 30, 2008, the Master of Arts in Urban Education Studies at Yale University. This graduate program will certify graduates in secondary education in the areas of biology, English, chemistry, general science, history/social studies, mathematics, physics and Spanish.

CERTIFICATION SHORTAGE AREAS

An analysis of fall hiring data reveals that this year there was a sharp increase in the number of vacancies due to the lack of qualified candidates (from 185 to 270). There has been a continued increase during the last four years in the number of annual positions to be filled (4,344 in 2002; 5,538 in 2005). The Department also reported that the urban, priority and poor rural school districts continue to struggle with the hiring and

retention of qualified staff members. Certification areas such as special education, Grades 7-12 mathematics, bilingual education, speech and language pathology, world languages and the sciences continue to be certification shortage areas.

The report summarized the Department's efforts to address problems with attracting qualified, certified teachers in specific subject areas,

especially in urban districts and districts with lower annual salaries and benefits. These include an "overhaul" of the certification structure and establishing or strengthening programs that attract high school students, college students who have not selected a major, recent graduates, out-of-state candidates, retirees and non-educators to teaching careers.

REPORT ON THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFICACY OF USING THE DESIGN-BUILD APPROACH TO SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

This report was prepared in compliance with Section 10-285f(c) of the Connecticut General Statutes, which requires the Board to submit said report to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly on education and finance by January 15, 2006. The report addresses findings of a study on the efficiency and efficacy of using the design-build approach to school construction projects. This method of project delivery differs from the traditional design-bid-build. Because only one school district chose to exercise the design-build option, the Department recommended that the pilot program be extended through 2008 and be limited to the construction of new school facilities.

EDUCATION REFERENCE GROUPS

Commissioner Sternberg presented a report to facilitate the Board's discussion of the state's Education Reference Groups (ERGs). ERGs are nine clusters of Connecticut public school districts with similar socioeconomic and need characteristics. They were originally designed to provide districts with a grouping of other districts having student populations with similar unalterable characteristics (e.g., parental income and marital status, and whether student speaks a language other than English at home). The ERGs have been used by the State Department of Education to report disparities in performance and resources among the state's districts and to place performance in context.

The 2005 ERG configuration was based on income, education, occupation, poverty, family structure, home language and district enrollment. The 2005 ERG update resulted in about one-third of districts being moved from one ERG to another. Some districts objected to their new placement, particularly those that

moved from ERG A to ERG B. The Board will continue its consideration of the appropriate use of ERGs or some similar type of grouping for purposes of assisting districts in reporting and analyzing student performance data.

Interim measures the Department is pursuing include the development of a comprehensive data warehouse containing all education data and examining the use of growth models in school accountability, such as the value-added model. The Council of Chief State School Officers described value-added models as "one type of growth model in which states or districts use student background characteristics and other data as statistical controls in order to isolate the specific effects of a particular school, program or teacher on student academic progress. Achievement growth over time at the school level is then the aggregate of growth for individual students controlling for each student's background and prior achievement."

GIFT FROM ING FINANCIAL ADVISERS

ING Financial Advisers presented a generous gift to the Board to support to the Connecticut Teacher of the Year Program. The \$25,000 donation was used to support the annual awards ceremony at The Bushnell and will support travel expenses incurred by the Teacher of the Year while performing her duties.

STATEWIDE LONGITUDINAL DATA SYSTEMS GRANT

The Board approved the Department's application for a grant from the Institute for Education Sciences in the amount of \$1.5 million. The three-year grant will be used to support the Department's capacity to maintain a statewide longitudinal data system in order to generate and use accurate and timely data to meet state and federal reporting requirements. The grant will also facilitate research on how to eliminate achievement gaps and improve learning for all students.

SUMMER FOOD SERVICE PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN

The Board approved the Department's submission of the State Plan for Fiscal Year 2006 for the Summer Food Service Program for Children to the United States Department of Agriculture. The Plan addresses the need of proper nutrition for children during the summer vacation. It is estimated that \$850,000 of the grant funds for the summer 2006 will provide 350,000 meals for students.

READING TO ACHIEVE: STATE POLICIES TO PROMOTE ADOLESCENT LITERACY

The Board approved the Department's application to the National Governors' Association for funds for the "Reading to Achieve" grant. Connecticut's proposal, "Project CT-Literacy," connects to the strategies of another NGA grant (Project CONN-ECT: Connecticut's Strategic Plan for High School Redesign), and will support the formation of a Literacy Advisory Committee, the development of a Grades 4-12 Connecticut Literacy Across Content Areas Curriculum Mapping Template, and the development of a website with comprehensive literacy information and professional development resources for educators, parents, students and the community.

CONNECTICUT TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL SYSTEM (CTHSS)

Rolling Capital Improvement and Capital Equipment Plan 2005-2010

The Board approved the CTHSS Rolling Capital Equipment and Capital Equipment Plan 2005-2010, for submission to the joint standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters related to education, finance, revenue, bonding and appropriations, and the budgets of state agencies.

Reauthorization of Trades 2006-2011

The Board approved the following trades for the period January 2006 to January 2011, pursuant to Section 10-95i of the Connecticut General Statutes: bioscience environmental technology; dental assistant; dental laboratory technician; early care and education; health technology; home health aide/certified nurse assistant; medical assistant; licensed practical nurse; and surgical technician. These trades continue to attract strong numbers of students and graduates have reported finding ample employment opportunities in the health care industry.

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE	STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBERS
Address: 165 Capitol Avenue Room 301 Hartford, CT 06106 Telephone: (860) 713-6510 Facsimile: (860) 713-7002 E-Mail: pamela.bergin@po.state.ct.us	<i>Allan B. Taylor, Chairperson</i> <i>Janet M. Finneran, Vice Chairperson</i> <i>Beverly R. Bobroske</i> <i>Donald J. Coolican</i> <i>Rebecca Crosswaith</i> <i>Lynne S. Farrell</i> <i>Theresa Hopkins-Staten</i> <i>Patricia B. Luke</i> <i>Aine McCarthy</i> <i>Timothy J. McDonald</i>
<p>To obtain a copy of a report considered by the Board, please contact the Office of Communications 860-713-6526.</p>	<i>Betty J. Sternberg, Secretary</i> <i>Valerie Lewis, ex officio</i>

The next meeting of the Board is scheduled on March 1, 2006. The meeting will be held in Room 307 of the State Office Building, 165 Capitol Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06106.